

# HUMOR and the ABJECT

[BLOG](#) [REVIEWS](#) [CONVERSATIONS](#) [POD](#) [INFINITE HESH](#) [ABOUT](#) [SEARCH](#) [SUPPORT](#)



## Artist Christine Sun Kim on Drawing, Sound, and Interpreting

MARCH 28, 2018

**Lead image:** Christine Sun Kim in front of her piece *Too Much Future* on the High Line. **Photo:** [Jared Buckhiester](#), from [an interview with The Standard](#) by Alex Waxman.

Artist [Christine Sun Kim](#) is based in Berlin and works in a variety of media, from ceramics to sound to drawing, with a focus on written language, musical notation, and American Sign Language (ASL). Over the last several years she's presented work in numerous notable venues including the Hood Museum at Dartmouth College, SFMOMA, the Rubin Museum of Art in New York, Carroll/Fletcher in London, the Museum of Modern Art, Art Basel Hong Kong, and many others. She's received two fellowships from TED and another from MIT's prestigious Media Lab program, and her work has been featured in i-D, Artforum, and LEAP Magazine, just to name a few. Right now, the Whitney Museum of American Art has on view a commissioned billboard work from her, [Too Much Future](#), as part of their public art installation series on the High Line.

Needless to say, she's been extremely busy.

After following each other online for a while, we finally met IRL in 2016 when I had the opportunity to invite her to be part of a call-and-response artist talk series called [Ten Arguments](#) at the Bruce High Quality Foundation University. For each of five events, we asked two people in contemporary art that we admired to deliver back-to-back, twenty-minute "arguments" on a specific pairing of concepts without consulting each other first. Afterwards, a moderated discussion would follow between the guests, a BHQFU faculty member, and the audience. We linked Christine up with curator and writer [Kimberly Drew](#), founder of the popular [Black Contemporary Art](#) Tumblr and the Metropolitan Museum of Art's social media manager. For their session, we asked them to speak about "Feedback and Noise," topics that, while ostensibly generalist in nature, seemed germane to each of their approaches to producing culture and their respective advocacy for visibility in the art world and beyond. It was a phenomenal final event for the series, and I've been following Christine's work even more closely ever since.

When I learned about her Whitney billboard project, I reached out over email to ask Christine to do an interview for *Humor and the Abject*. In all honesty, I figured that she would likely not have the time—she addresses her most recent, long-form undertaking in the interview—but I was pleasantly surprised. She wrote back and was enthusiastic about having a conversation! Below, please enjoy learning a little bit more about Christine's process, her thinking, and the opportunity to check out some of the recent exciting works she's exhibited.



Christine Sun Kim, *Too Much Future* (2018), The High Line, New York, NY. Photo: The Whitney Museum of American Art

**Hello, Christine. What's new with you, non-art-wise? You've been living in Berlin for some time now, right?**

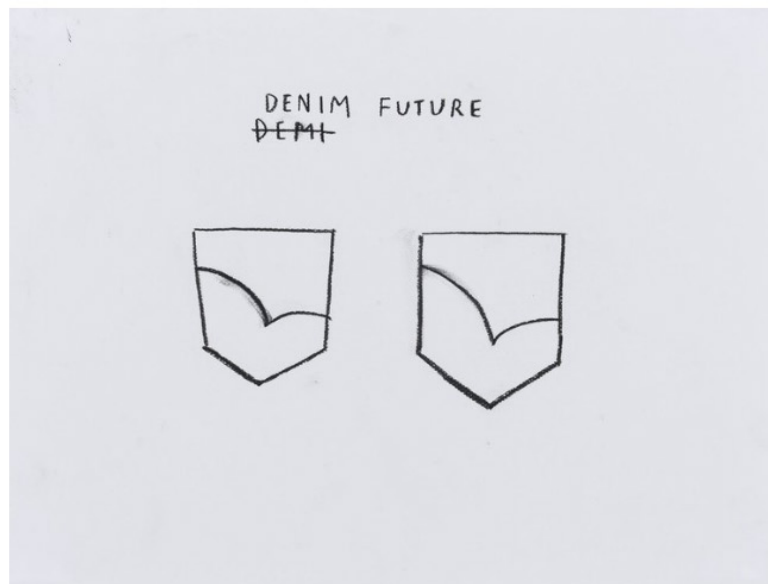
Yes, and I just had a baby girl! That's pretty much the only thing that's happening in my life. She's nearing nine months old. It's crazy watching her transforming from a blob—basically a ball of reflexes—into an active girl with so much sass. I just gave her a big spoonful of mashed avocado and she took the excess part out of her mouth and threw it across the room. Damn, girl.

**Damn, indeed. In January, the Whitney Museum debuted a new work of yours titled *Too Much Future*, an outdoor installation across from the museum on the High Line. It's a rendering of the word "future" in American Sign Language (ASL), reimagined therein as bold, black swathes. What does the concept of "too much future" connote for you?**

Lately, I've been to a bunch of tech conferences and I think people are so overly-obsessed about making the future "now" and the present "past". Also, with the Trump administration, people are anxiously anticipating too many things—it's so difficult watching my home dealing with this massive crisis. On the top of that, I'd read an article somewhere online about how each language has its own sense of time. For example, "soon" could mean "right now" in some languages or "later" in others. I like to think that you can actually time travel—or maybe think about it as futuring—through different languages. It's a pity that many Americans are monolingualistic, completely stuck in one timeline. Sorta like me, I guess... I haven't learned a lick of German yet, and I have a half-German baby. Yikes.

**Members of the general public stroll along the High Line daily, and many of them are not people who are all that concerned with contemporary art. What do you hope the piece conjures for someone who encounters it and is unfamiliar with your work?**

I think one can easily access the piece by reading. The billboard says "Too Much Future" and you just let the visual part control the meaning. I hope that works out. If the grammar seems boiled down, that's because that aspect is usually shown on my face. When you sign "future," you use your face to add texture and mood to it. Even to describe its size. I love how you can tweak your face just a bit to radically alter the meaning. Lastly, I consider that a tribute to ASL.



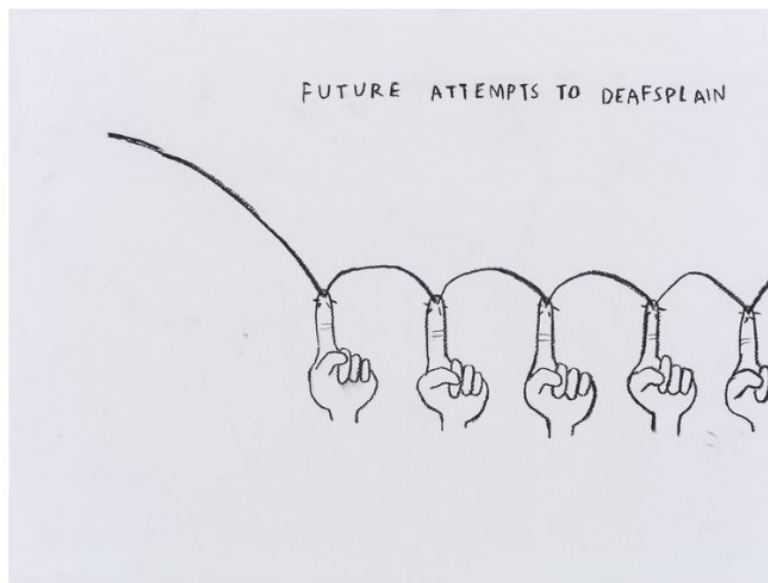
Christine Sun Kim, *Denim Future* (2017), charcoal on paper, 30x40cm, part of the "Future Base" series she exhibited at the 2016 Shanghai Biennale with White Space Beijing

***Too Much Future* is consistent with the formal and conceptual qualities of your past drawing practice, but did you change your approach in any way knowing that it would be so public-facing?**

Not at all. It started out as a small drawing as part of "**Future Base**," a twenty-drawing series for the Shanghai Biennale in 2016. After the Whitney invited me to contribute, I re-drew it on a slightly different size paper so that it would fit the billboard format.



Christine Sun Kim, *Good Grief Future* (2017), charcoal on paper, 30x40cm, part of the "Future Base" series she exhibited at the 2016 Shanghai Biennale with White Space Beijing



Christine Sun Kim, *Future Attempts to Deafspain* (2017), charcoal on paper, 30x40cm, part of the "Future Base" series she exhibited at the 2016 Shanghai Biennale with White Space Beijing

**Something that I've always loved in your drawings is that they are visually very accessible, but also reminiscent of codes, ciphers. Do you see a play between accessibility and puzzles in your work?**

People often think there are ciphers in my drawings, but people don't really consider musical notations codes, do they?

**Oh, right—that makes sense!**

It's very similar to [ASL gloss](#); it's a technical writing system used to record signs on paper. Sometimes I use their notation style, but not too much because I wouldn't want the viewer to find that experience too specific or closed.





Christine Sun Kim, *The Sound of Temperature Rising* (2017), charcoal on paper, 125x125cm, part of the "Sound of Non-Sounds" series she exhibited at the Rubin Museum's group exhibition "The World is Sound." Photo: Rubin Museum and David de Armas

**Is your drawing practice foundational to your sound work? Meaning, do sound pieces begin as scores or are they more intuitive? Perhaps it's a bit of both?**

Honestly, I had to monetize my practice somehow.

Ha! Thank you for being so candid.

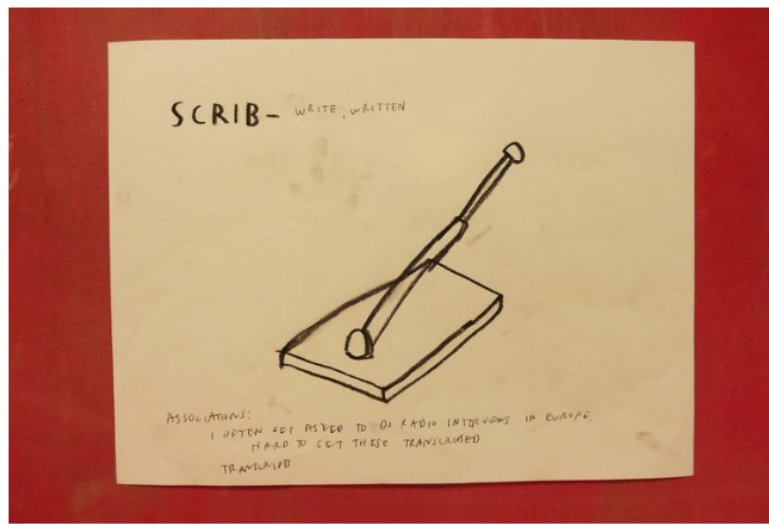
Sure! I focused on making tons and tons of drawings. Then, they slowly became part of my practice. My general ideas usually start as non-scores.



Christine Sun Kim, *The Grid of Prefixed Acousmatics* (2017), ceramics, charcoal and pen on paper, Strauss Gallery, Hood Museum, Hanover, NH. Photo: Rob Strong, Strauss Gallery & Dartmouth College

**What can you tell me about the concept of "acousmatic" sounds? They were essential to your fall 2017 exhibition of ceramics works and drawings at Dartmouth College's Hood Museum of Art.**

This also relates to my relationship with interpreters. "Acousmatic" means how sound becomes an independent "object," functioning without considering its origins—sometimes unidentifiable to the listeners. When I first learned this term, it made me think of my interpreters and how incredibly skilled they are because they often don't turn their heads when there are new sound sources. They just point to them without looking. In a way, it is acousmatic but when they sign, sounds become "visible" again. I was wondering what it should be called, like "post-acousmatic," or "anti-acousmatic"? So, I looked up the list of prefixes and decided to make a list of selected prefixes, write down my associations to each one, and make clay sculptures.



Christine Sun Kim, *Scrib-* (2017), charcoal and pen on paper. Photo: courtesy of the artist

For example, *scrib-* means "write/written" and I often get invited to do radio interviews—which I find quite funny—and there's almost always been a bit of tension when I've asked them to transcribe so that my deaf friends can access my interviews. Mostly, this happens because of small budgets or time issues.



Christine Sun Kim, *Scrib-Acousmatic* (2017), ceramic. Photo: Rob Strong, Strauss Gallery & Dartmouth College

For *Scrib-Acousmatic* I made an antenna and that's one of my favorite sculptures. I used clay because it's like cementing sounds and it's really, really, really nice working with my hands, especially after years of working with straight up sound and little else... Well, drawing is one thing, but not entirely...

For *Scrib-Acousmatic* I made an antenna and that's one of my favorite sculptures. I used clay because it's like cementing sounds and it's really, really, really nice working with my hands, especially after years of working with straight up sound and little else... Well, drawing is one thing, but not entirely...



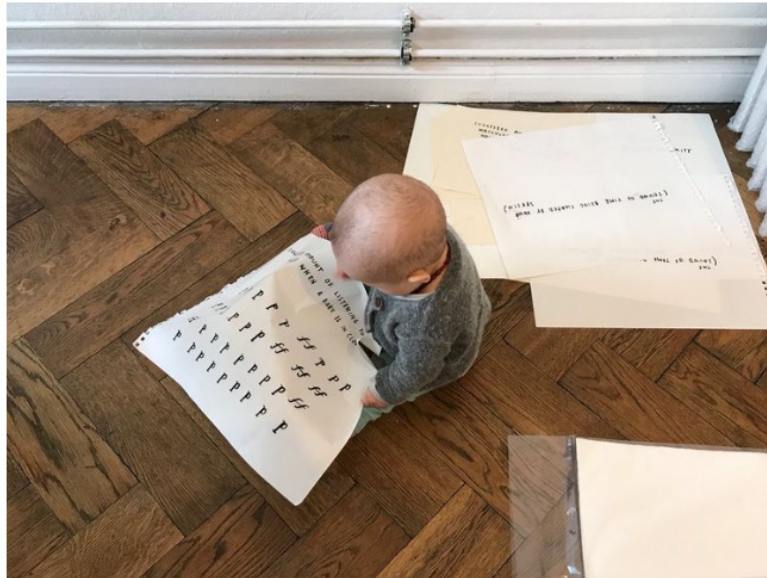
Christine Sun Kim working on ceramic "acousmatic" sculptures

Could some of your drawings be thought of as an inverse to “acousmatic” sounds, where the source or architecture is visible but the sound is not perceived?

So Lawrence Weiner-esque.

OMG. I feel attacked. Ha ha. Going back to *Too Much Future*, in describing it, the Whitney says, “[T]he same unpredictability that can make the future a source of anxiety can also create a sense of optimism.” Maintaining optimism presently can feel almost Sisyphean. Do you have any tips for doing so?

MAKE BABIES. The political situation made me utterly sad and anxious until my baby came out. Now, I'm way too busy to think about that dick. He doesn't deserve my attention.



Unreasonably cute.

One last thing: I know that you enjoy reading recipes, even if you have no intention of ever preparing the meal. I like to this that this relates a bit to your drawings. Could you share any that you like as a type of score?



3,186 次赞


diys.tv Looks so fun 🍷 Follow @awesome.makeups 🍷 @awesome.makeups 🍷  
@awesome.makeups 🍷 @awesome.makeups By @tipsybartender

全部 19 条评论

15 个月前











buzzfeedtasty

关注






119,167 次赞



**buzzfeedtasty** BREAKFAST ONION CUPS Servings: 6 **INGREDIENTS** 2 cups broccoli florets, minced 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded 7 eggs 5 strips bacon, cooked and diced 1 large red onion 1 teaspoon salt ½ teaspoon pepper ½ teaspoon chili powder 2 tablespoon milk Garnish Parmesan cheese **PREPARATION** 1. Heat oven to 400°/200°C. 2. Mix eggs, milk, and spices in large mixing bowl. 3. Add broccoli, bacon, and cheese, and continue mixing until all ingredients are well incorporated. 4. Cut ends off the red onion and then slice in half. Gently pop out rings, using desired size. 5. Heat cast-iron pan on low and place onion rings in the pan. 6. Spoon in small amount of egg mixture and press on the onion ring create a seal, then repeat for all rings. Pour the remaining mixture filling to just about the top of each ring. 7. Cover with foil. 8. Place in oven and cook for 25 minutes, or until eggs are cooked through and slightly puffed and onion rings are tender. 9. Remove from pan immediately and sprinkle with desired topping. 10. Enjoy!

全部 1,930 条评论

14 个月前




Christine Sun Kim's Too Much Future is currently on view on the High Line across from the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, NY.

**buzzfeedtasty** BREAKFAST ONION CUPS Servings: 6 **INGREDIENTS** 2 cups broccoli florets, minced 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded 7 eggs 5 strips bacon, cooked and diced 1 large red onion 1 teaspoon salt ½ teaspoon pepper ½ teaspoon chili powder 2 tablespoon milk Garnish Parmesan cheese **PREPARATION** 1. Heat oven to 400°/200°C. 2. Mix eggs, milk, and spices in large mixing bowl. 3. Add broccoli, bacon, and cheese, and continue mixing until all ingredients are well incorporated. 4. Cut ends off the red onion and then slice in half. Gently pop out rings, using desired size. 5. Heat cast-iron pan on low and place onion rings in the pan. 6. Spoon in small amount of egg mixture and press on the onion ring create a seal, then repeat for all rings. Pour the remaining mixture filling to just about the top of each ring. 7. Cover with foil. 8. Place in oven and cook for 25 minutes, or until eggs are cooked through and slightly puffed and onion rings are tender. 9. Remove from pan immediately and sprinkle with desired topping. 10. Enjoy!

全部 1,930 条评论

14 个月前



Christine Sun Kim's Too Much Future is currently on view on the High Line across from the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, NY.